



Examining The New York Times' Top 30 Songwriters List

Description

A new list from *The New York Times* identifies the "30 Greatest Living American Songwriters," created by a panel of six journalists with input from around 250 music experts. This initiative aims to highlight significant figures in songwriting but has sparked debate over some omissions and inclusions, particularly from country music.

Critics argue that many current popular songwriters were overlooked, reflecting a trend of cynicism towards such lists. While the *Times* acknowledges its limitations, it strives to present a wide range of perspectives. Notably, well-known country figures like Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson made the list, along with Lucinda Williams, revealing an effort to include diverse songwriting backgrounds.

However, some feel the list falls short by grouping several contemporary country songwriters—Josh Osborne, Brandy Clark, and Shane McAnally—into one entry, which diminishes their individual contributions. Critics suggest that including the "Love Junkies," a trio of successful songwriters, would have provided a stronger representation from country music.

Taylor Swift's inclusion has also drawn criticism, with some questioning her status as a great songwriter. While her impact on pop culture and songwriting is significant, her ranking alongside legendary figures like Bob Dylan raises concerns about comparison.

The list's restrictions, such as focusing exclusively on American songwriters, have led to further exclusions, including notable names like Paul McCartney and Joni Mitchell. Critics highlight that James McMurtry, known for his powerful songwriting, also deserves recognition.

As discussions around this list continue, it serves as a reminder of the subjective nature of musical appreciation and the ongoing contributions of songwriters.

Vocabulary List:

1. **panel** //ˈpænəl// (noun): a small group that makes choices or decisions
2. **omissions** //ˌɒmɪʃənz// (noun): things left out or not included
3. **cynicism** //ˈsɪnɪsɪzəm// (noun): a belief that people are selfish or dishonest
4. **perspectives** //pəˈspektɪvz// (noun): different ways of looking at something
5. **contemporary** //kənˈtɛmpərəri// (adjective): existing now, not from the past
6. **diminishes** //dɪˈmɪnɪʃɪz// (verb): makes something seem less important or smaller



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What publication created the list of the '30 Greatest Living American Songwriters'?
Option: Rolling Stone
Option: Billboard
Option: The New York Times
Option: Pitchfork
2. How many journalists were on the panel that created the list?
Option: Four
Option: Five
Option: Six
Option: Seven
3. Which country music figures were mentioned as part of the list?
Option: Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson
Option: Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw
Option: Taylor Swift and Blake Shelton
Option: Carrie Underwood and Keith Urban
4. What criticism was made regarding the contemporary country songwriters included in the list?
Option: They were represented too individually
Option: They were grouped into one entry
Option: They were not included at all
Option: Their songs were overlooked
5. Who is mentioned as raising concerns about Taylor Swift's ranking on the list?
Option: James McMurtry
Option: Bob Dylan
Option: Dolly Parton
Option: Stakeholders of the Times
6. Which notable songwriter was excluded due to the list's restriction focusing exclusively on American songwriters?



- Option: Joni Mitchell
- Option: Taylor Swift
- Option: Lucinda Williams
- Option: Paul Simon

True-False

7. The list only included well-known country songwriters.
8. The panel received input from about 250 music experts.
9. The restrictions of the list resulted in including some international songwriters.
10. Critics agree that the omissions in the list reflect a positive trend in music recognition.
11. James McMurtry is mentioned as deserving recognition for his songwriting.
12. The initiative to create the list has been universally accepted without any debate.

Gap-Fill

13. The list was created by a panel of six journalists with input from around _____ music experts.
14. Notable country figures like Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson were included, but some felt the list fell short by grouping _____ contemporary country songwriters.
15. Critics suggested that including the 'Love Junkies' would have provided a stronger representation from _____ music.
16. Some question Taylor Swift's status as a great songwriter alongside legendary figures like _____ Dylan.
17. The list's restrictions excluded notable names like _____ McCartney.



18. The discussions around the list highlight the subjective nature of musical _____
and the contributions of songwriters.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. The New York Times 2. Six 3. Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson 4. They were grouped into one entry 5. Bob Dylan 6. Paul McCartney

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. 250 14. several 15. country 16. Bob 17. Paul 18. appreciation

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the main function of a panel in a discussion?

- Option: To provide entertainment
- Option: To offer expert opinions
- Option: To increase cynicism
- Option: To simplify complex issues

2. Which of the following best describes cynicism?

- Option: Optimism about the future
- Option: Skepticism toward human motives
- Option: A strong belief in fairness
- Option: A positive outlook on life

3. What is the primary purpose of a documentary film?

- Option: To entertain
- Option: To provide a fictional story
- Option: To inform or document real events
- Option: To promote a product

4. Allegations often refer to:

- Option: Confirmed facts
- Option: Rumors or claims without proof
- Option: Scientific evidence
- Option: Witness testimonies



5. When a complex issue is explained too simply, it:

- Option: Enhances understanding
- Option: Accounts for every detail
- Option: Oversimplifies the subject
- Option: Encourages deeper analysis

6. What does nuance refer to in a discussion?

- Option: A lack of detail
- Option: Subtle differences or variations
- Option: A single perspective
- Option: An extreme opinion

7. What does the term legacy most often refer to?

- Option: An individual's past achievements
- Option: A future promise
- Option: Current trends
- Option: A temporary situation

8. What is the main goal of an investigation?

- Option: To entertain
- Option: To find the truth or gather information
- Option: To confuse others
- Option: To promote an agenda

9. A scientific breakthrough often leads to:

- Option: More confusion
- Option: New discoveries and advancements
- Option: A return to older methods
- Option: Delayed results

10. What does the term deceased mean?

- Option: Alive
- Option: Lost
- Option: To have passed away
- Option: To be forgotten

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. Different perspectives can provide more _____ on a complex issue.

12. The contemporary art movement focuses on _____ themes and social issues.



13. The dynamics of group behavior can often affect _____ outcomes.
14. Increased engagement in the community can lead to _____ changes.
15. The project was abandoned due to a lack of _____.
16. Effective interventions can help individuals who are _____ to substances.
17. There has been a significant shift in _____ regarding environmental issues.
18. The voter turnout was much higher than _____ in the last election.
19. The new product was unveiled at the _____.
20. The policy changes were incorporated into the organization's _____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. Omissions in the report can lead to misunderstandings.
22. The depictions of historical events in the film were both accurate and engaging.
23. The documentary navigates through complex social issues with sensitivity.
24. Several prominent figures were interviewed for the documentary.
25. The scientist made a breakthrough in cancer research that changed treatment paradigms.
26. The investigation revealed critical information about the case.
27. Recent shifts in policy are expected to affect many communities.
28. Many deceased artists are still honored for their contributions to culture.
29. Oversimplifies in media reporting can mislead the audience.
30. Targeted interventions can significantly improve outcomes for patients.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. To offer expert opinions 2. Skepticism toward human motives 3. To inform or document real events



4. Rumors or claims without proof 5. Oversimplifies the subject 6. Subtle differences or variations
7. An individual's past achievements 8. To find the truth or gather information 9. New discoveries and
advancements 10. To have passed away

Gap-Fill: 11. insight 12. current 13. decision 14. positive 15. funding 16. addicted 17. attitudes 18.
anticipated 19. launch event 20. strategy

Matching sentence: 1. omissions 2. depictions 3. navigates 4. prominent 5. breakthrough 6. investigation
7. shifts 8. deceased 9. oversimplifies 10. interventions

CATEGORY

1. Entertainment - LEVEL5

POST TAG

1. C1
2. dissecting
3. ESL learning
4. esl news
5. greatest songwriters
6. Level 5
7. New York Times

Tags

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Author

aimeeyoung99

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